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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [CO](#) [OAS](#) [AUC](#)

SUBJECT: AUC'S LA MOJANA BLOC DEMOBILIZES AND MANCUSO STEPS DOWN

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

**¶1.** (U) Summary: 110 members of the La Mojana Bloc of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) demobilized on February 2. They received Reincorporation Program IDs, took a demographic survey, and renounced AUC membership. Six members faced active arrest warrants. The bloc was active in the swampy lowlands of Sucre, Bolivar, and Cordoba Departments and had been relatively isolated from the AUC central command. Since 2003, 4,809 paramilitaries have demobilized in the peace process. During the ceremony, it was announced that AUC commander Salvatore Mancuso stepped down as the AUC's military chief. He will continue participating in negotiations, but his demobilized civilian status prevents him from being an armed military commander. End Summary.

**¶2.** (U) On February 2, the La Mojana Bloc of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) demobilized in southern Sucre Department. There were 110 members, who turned in their weapons, received a Reincorporation Program ID, took a demographic survey, and signed an individual renunciation of AUC membership. The National Registrar's Office began verifying, replacing, or newly issuing national identification cards ("cedulas") following the ceremony. Only six paramilitaries claimed to not have any identification documents. Another six members had active arrest warrants; the GOC is verifying if these warrants are for pardonable crimes. If not pardonable, the individuals will be required to go to the concentration zone in Santa Fe de Ralito, Cordoba Department. The demobilization took place in a specially designated zone in a public recreation area in the rural district of Nueva Esperanza in the municipality of Guaranda. The zone will be in existence until February 4, after which time the paramilitaries will be required to report to a reinsertion center within eight days.

**¶3.** (C) The bloc was active in the La Mojana lowlands where Sucre, Bolivar, and Cordoba Departments meet. The area's swampy terrain made the bloc generally autonomous from the AUC central command. The more populated northern part of Sucre has a heavy FARC presence in the mountainous region of Montes de Maria, while the capital city and the coast is dominated by a paramilitary strongman called "Ricardo Cadena." Cadena is loosely affiliated with the AUC but has not participated in the peace process.

**¶4.** (U) The La Mojana Bloc's demobilization brings the total paramilitaries demobilized collectively since 2003 to 4,809.

**¶5.** (C) During the ceremony, Peace Commissioner Restrepo spoke on behalf of the GOC, and several other government, church, and OAS officials attended. Senior paramilitary commander Ernesto Baez and bloc commander Ramon Mojana represented the AUC. Unlike past demobilizations, AUC commander Salvatore Mancuso did not attend. Mancuso, who formally demobilized and disarmed late last year and demobilized all the blocs that were under his direct control, has stepped down as the AUC's military chief. He will remain in the concentration zone in Ralito and continue participating in negotiations. Julian Bolivar, the political commander of the Central Bolivar Bloc (BCB), agreed to replace Mancuso for one month. The BCB is the second largest paramilitary group represented at the negotiating table in Ralito. It is required to demobilize by the end of 2005.

WOOD